



Location: AC1-366

Phone: (305) 919-4039

**Lab Director:** Stephen J. Ross, Ph.D.

sross@fiu.edu

(c) 845-649-6051

(o) 305-919-5864

### **Graduate Research Assistants:**

Brian Cahill:

bcahill@live.com

(c) 309-310-9219

### **Objectives:**

Welcome to the Applied Social Cognition Laboratory. We hope that this experience will give you an enhanced understanding of experimental research, provide valuable mentoring and preparation for graduate school, and provide you with advanced knowledge about psychology and statistical packages such as SPSS. Specifically, this experience will:

- a) Provide undergraduates with experience in an experimental research lab
- b) Provide RAs with an understanding of the ASCL's research
- c) Expose RAs to graduate school experiences
- d) Provide a letter of recommendation upon successful completion of research experience

### **Readings:**

We have developed a list of readings related to research in the areas of eyewitness psychology and juror decision-making. This list and the accompanying readings will be provided to you via e-mail. They are also available on the CD entitled "Starting out in the ASCL" which you will be provided upon starting in the lab. You should familiarize yourself with these articles within the first couple weeks you are a member of the lab. These readings will provide you with background knowledge about our areas of research. In addition, we will require you to read other articles throughout your time in the lab to help you attain additional knowledge related to more specific aspects of our research.

In addition, we have selected some "mainstream" readings that you may find interesting. These readings are *not* required, however they provide insight into eyewitness psychology and are intended for the general public. For many graduate students, these books have worked to increase their resolve in pursuing a career in this field.

Dwyer, J. (2004). *True witness: Cops, courts, science, and the battle against misidentification*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Loftus, E., & Ketcham, K. (1991). *Witness for the defense: The accused, the eyewitness, and the expert that puts memory on trial*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

- Scheck, B., Neufeld, P., & Dwyer, J. (2003). *Actual innocence: When justice goes wrong and how to make it right*. Putnam, NY: Penguin Publishers.
- Wagenaar, W. (1989). *Identifying Ivan: A case study in legal psychology*. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press.

### **Lab Meetings:**

The ASCL will convene for full lab meetings periodically throughout the semester. The meetings will typically occur every week or every other week depending on the current demands in the laboratory. Schedules for these meetings will be determined prior to the beginning of the semester. During the lab meetings we will discuss our research and any new issues that are current in the area of legal psychology. All undergraduate assistants are expected to attend every lab meeting and will be asked to discuss:

- a) Their progress in the lab since the last meeting
- b) Their lab responsibilities for the coming weeks

This meeting is also a time for RA's to raise any issues within the lab. These issues can include experiences that you've had while running experimental sessions/creating stimulus or other topics relating to our research.

In addition, RAs may be asked to read a journal article and participate in a group discussion. The purpose of these articles is to expose RAs to the type of research the lab is conducting so that you will be able to describe the research in which you participated. For example, if you are on a graduate school interview and asked what research you are working on, we want you to be able to adequately explain the research.

### **Lab Duties:**

An RA's duties in the lab may include but are not limited to:

- attend training sessions / lab meetings
- stimulus creation
- data entry
- running experimental sessions
- interacting with participants
- coding data

While the number of hours worked is somewhat negotiable and may vary throughout the semester depending upon such things as the number of projects we have running or the number of participants signing up, we expect the following:

Volunteer: 5-7 hours per week  
Credit: 8-10 hours per week

Volunteers are expected to perform the same duties as those taking credits and have the same responsibilities, including lab duties, attendance policy, and lab meeting.

Grades will depend upon attendance and participation at lab meetings, fulfillment of lab duties (see above) and minimal absences.

### **Absences:**

Research assistants must be consistent and reliable in their attendance, and grades will primarily be based upon this factor. Many times, the graduate students will depend upon you to “run the lab” during the time which you are scheduled to work.

Working in a lab is a very unique educational experience. There are no papers, exams, or quizzes by which students are evaluated. Each undergraduate student gets to create his or her own hours for the semester (with final approval from the graduate students and the lab director), and the research schedule is commonly tailored around the research assistant’s needs.

You must follow these guidelines:

- You must arrive at the lab **at least 15 minutes prior** to the start of the experimental session you are running.
- In the cases of medical and family emergencies, you can avoid having your grade impacted by giving us two hours or more of notice
- If an unavoidable and urgent scheduling conflict arises, you need to find a replacement (another research assistant) at least one full day in advance, and clear this with a graduate student or the lab director. If you have to cancel more than three times, your grade will be lowered half a letter for each additional cancellation.
- Arriving late to an experimental session will result in your final grade being lowered.

For RA’s volunteering in the lab you are still expected to follow the same guidelines as those who are in the lab for credit. Multiple absences will result in being excused from the lab.

### **Lab Director:**

Dr. Ross is the director of the ASCL. At this time, he is the primary contact for all undergraduate RAs in the lab. Accordingly, any queries regarding scheduling of office hours, data collection, or general lab issues should be directed to him. It is likely that a graduate research assistant will be appointed the laboratory coordinator. At that time, you will be informed of the change and the lab coordinator will become the primary contact for undergraduate RAs.

## **Confidentiality Issues:**

During your time in the lab, you are likely to be exposed to sensitive information. This includes responses of research participants and any documents generated by them in the process of participation in the research. There may also be times where you will be exposed to sensitive information regarding actual criminal and civil cases. Data files constructed in the computers should not be taken away from the lab. No copies of our data files can be taken out of the lab on disks or sent out by e-mail. They are the property of the ASCL and ultimately the University. And finally, the details of our research plans are proprietary information and should not be discussed with others.

## **Miscellaneous Items:**

While Dr. Ross and the graduate students appreciate the responsible nature of the RA's and encourage them to keep us informed of absences, schedule issues, etc, we respectfully ask that no phone calls are made **after 11pm and before 8am**. Since we check our email regularly, you should **EMAIL** us if you need to contact us at night.

In addition, we know that "texting" is a widespread form of communication; however, we ask that you **DO NOT use texting** to contact any of us in the laboratory.

**You MUST check your e-mail EVERY DAY.** The primary means of communication in the lab is through **e-mail**. If sessions are cancelled, or we need to tell you something about the experiment, we will use e-mail. Additionally, we may ask that you check SONA (<http://fiu.sona-systems.com/>) to see if participants have signed up for a session.